United Nations A/61/961

General Assembly

Distr.: General
20 June 2007

Original: English

Sixty-first session
Agenda item 44
Culture of peace

Identical letters dated 19 June 2007 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly

I write with regard to an issue of vital importance to the United Nations. The international community cannot be silent in situations where the violation of human rights is systemic, grave and widespread, and where States dismiss issues of human rights and refuse to engage in meaningful dialogue. When a country does not engage its own citizens, cooperate with the international community or address serious situations, the international community has no choice but to express its views and voice its concern. Hence, I write concerning the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Though human rights violations in the Islamic Republic of Iran are widely known and were addressed at the current session of the General Assembly, as had been done previously, in resolution 61/176, I nonetheless wish to highlight the areas of utmost severity.

Despite being party to, and claiming to implement, four of the six principal human rights treaties — the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child — the Iranian Government violates all of them, as well as its own laws governing these areas. In particular, the Islamic Republic of Iran has consistently failed to comply with international standards in the administration of justice — including, but not limited to, the absence of due process of law, the refusal to provide fair and public hearings and the denial of the right to counsel.

Alongside its disregard for legislative norms, the Iranian Government maintains extra-constitutional courts and special courts for the clergy, whose decisions negate the rule of law and are final, without appeal. The lack of judicial transparency is only magnified by the physical abuses occurring in Iranian prisons, as well as the administering of death sentences for social and political offences including, inter alia, apostasy, blasphemy, sodomy, adultery and prostitution.

07-39077 (E) 220607

In this area, the gross human rights abuses of the Islamic Republic of Iran have been well documented. Previously, in reports by both the United Nations and civil society organizations, concern has been raised regarding the continued use of flogging, amputations and other forms of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. The use of public executions has increased in the last year, with more minors executed annually in the Islamic Republic of Iran than in any other nation.

Despite its having ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Islamic Republic of Iran, in law and in practice, discriminates against women. The Government condones routine violence against women, such as "honour killings" and other retributive acts of violence carried out against women for shaming or bringing dishonour to their families. There is also substantial violence against the girl child specifically, as well as violence against children in general.

Additionally, the Islamic Republic of Iran severely restricts the freedom of the press. Its courts have effectively paralysed the reform movement, shutting down pro-reform publications and banning them by judicial decision.

But the Islamic Republic of Iran has not confined its disregard for human rights to within its own borders. The President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, has on more than one occasion denied the Holocaust, while simultaneously calling for Israel's destruction. To call for the annihilation of another Member State — of anyone at all, no matter their race, religion, or ethnicity — constitutes direct and public incitement to commit genocide, a gross violation of international law.

In the light of the aforementioned policies and practices, it is patently obvious that the Islamic Republic of Iran cannot honestly support open dialogue between civilizations and among Member States. Its utter disregard for human rights and human values runs counter to the ideals enshrined within a variety of commitments made by the international community. Specifically, its human rights violations are an affront to the very resolution it sponsored in the past, entitled "Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations" (resolution 60/4), in which the Assembly called for Member States to commit to "advancing human welfare, freedom and progress everywhere, and to encouraging tolerance, respect, dialogue and cooperation among different cultures, civilizations and peoples". From the examples cited above, it is clear that the Islamic Republic of Iran wishes to have no place in this dialogue.

History has shown us that indifference and silence never resolved anything. On the contrary, scrutinizing and speaking out against systematic abusers of human rights can make an unmistakable and lasting difference.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 44.

(*Signed*) Daniel **Carmon**
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.